



PRESS RELEASE
*Office of the United States Attorney
Middle District of Florida*

PAUL I. PEREZ
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

400 North Tampa Street
Suite 3200
Tampa, Florida 33602
813/274-6000
813/274-6300 (Fax)

300 North Hogan Street, Suite 700
Post Office Box 600
Jacksonville, Florida 32201
904/301-6300
904/301-6310 (Fax)

80 North Hughey Avenue,
Room 201
Orlando, Florida 32801
407/648-7500
407/648-7643 (Fax)

2110 First Street,
Suite 3-137
Fort Myers, Florida 33901
239/461-2200
239/461-2219 (fax)

Contact: Steve Cole ♦ Public Affairs Specialist ♦ 813/274-6352

For Immediate Release

May 8, 2003

MAN CONVICTED OF MURDERING OMAR AND JESUS SANCHEZ

On May 8, 2003, following a four day trial, a federal jury in Tampa convicted Jose Manuel Hernandez-Miranda on all counts of a Superseding Indictment which charged him with federal offenses relating to the murders of Omar and Jesus Sanchez on February 11, 1998, in Sebring, Florida. Specifically, Hernandez-Miranda was convicted on two counts of murder in furtherance of a racketeering enterprise in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1959(a)(1), and two counts of murder with a firearm during and in relation to a drug trafficking offense in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 924(j). The jury also convicted Hernandez-Miranda of participating in a drug trafficking conspiracy based on his involvement in the drug-related murders.

According to evidence presented at the trial, the murders were ordered by Louis Clemente, who headed a drug trafficking organization which was involved in the distribution of significant quantities of methamphetamine and marijuana in Highlands and Pasco Counties and elsewhere. Louis Clemente hired Hernandez-Miranda and Cesar Irving Lynch-Mayo to kill the Sanchez brothers rather than pay a drug debt. The bodies of Jesus

and Omar Sanchez were discovered in May of 1998 buried in an orange grove in Highlands County.

Louis Clemente, along with many other members of the organization, previously pleaded guilty to their participation in the drug trafficking conspiracy. Louis Clemente is currently serving a life sentence. Hernandez-Miranda faces a mandatory life sentence. Sentencing is scheduled before U.S. District Court Judge Richard A. Lazzara on August 8, 2003.

The investigation was conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration, Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the Sebring Police Department, with the assistance of the Highlands County Sheriff's Office and the Hazlehurst, Georgia Police Department. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney W. Stephen Muldrow.